

Mission-practice alignment in service learning programs at Jesuit college and universities

Presenters:

Kelly Brotzman

Director of Service Learning, Loyola University New Orleans

Danielle Corea

Program Coordinator, Office of Service Learning, Fairfield University

Heather Mack

Community Engagement Research and Assessment Director, Loyola University New Orleans

Melissa Quan

Director of Service Learning, Fairfield University

Mission-practice alignment in service learning

1. Are three characteristically Jesuit values infused into the practice of service learning at AJCU schools?

If so, how and to what extent?

If not, why not?

2. Is there any degree of “melt”* between mission and practice with regard to the explicit incorporation of Jesuit values into service learning programs at AJCU schools?

If so, are there any clear reasons for the “melt”?

If so, what can be done to address “melt”?

* “Melt” refers to the differential between mission and practice.

Why these questions matter

- Mission-practice alignment is a measure of excellence in the field of service learning
- Mission-practice alignment in service learning programs is not automatic; it requires intentionality and reflection
- Mission-practice alignment helps identify the most appropriate student learning outcomes
- Asking these questions leads to greater self-awareness within and among higher education traditions

Spoiler Alert!

1. Are three characteristically Jesuit values infused into the practice of service learning at AJCU schools? **YES**

If so, how and to what extent? **In a variety of ways, and to varying extents**

2. Is there any degree of “melt”* between mission and practice with regard to the explicit incorporation of Jesuit values into service learning programs at AJCU schools? **YES**

If so, are there any clear reasons for the “melt”? **Several**
If so, what can be done to address “melt”? **Lots; research generated several recommendations**

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Instrument Design

Spring 2012

On-line survey administered

- AJCU Service Learning Administrators
- 34 item survey
 - 6 parallel questions about 3 Jesuit values
 - Social Justice, Solidarity, Ignatian Spirituality

Document Review administered

- Captured all AJCU institution's web content referring to service learning
 - Analyzed for Jesuit value rhetoric

Data Collection

Data Collected:

89% (n=25) survey response rate

96% (n=27) institutions had service learning websites

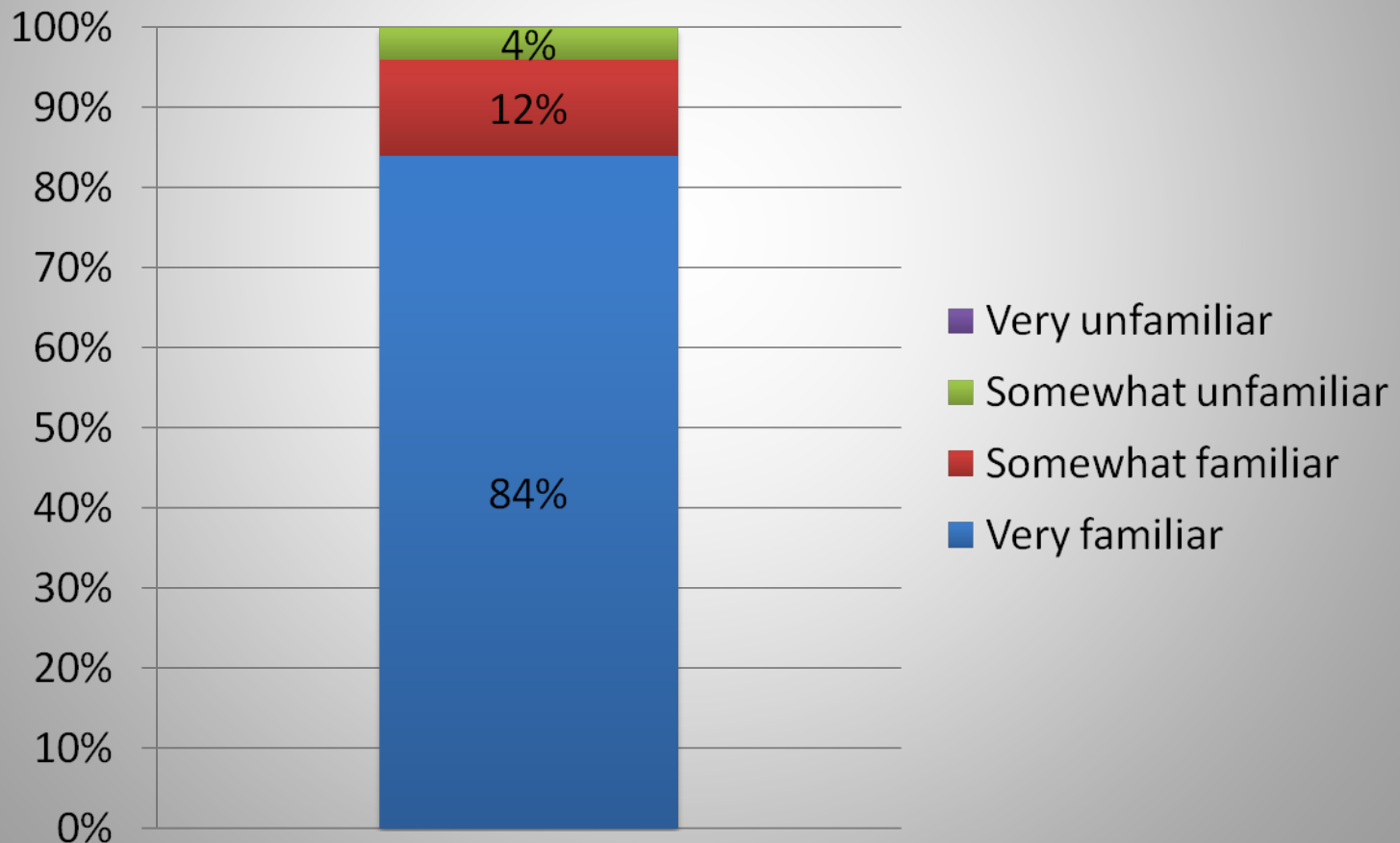
Survey Respondents:

70% - Primary function is service learning admin

General findings

Familiarity with Jesuit values

Please rate your familiarity with the Jesuit values in American Jesuit colleges and universities.



Institutional **resonance** of the 3 values

Most

1. Social Justice



2. Solidarity



3. Ignatian Spirituality

Least

Resonance: the value **matters**, evokes **meaning**, or carries **significance** across the university

Uniformity of terms

Most

1. Social Justice



2. Ignatian Spirituality



3. Solidarity

Least

Uniformity: the same words and phrases are **consistently** used to describe the value

Findings: Social Justice

This value has highest degree of **resonance** and **uniformity** by a large margin

HALLMARK VALUE

Incorporated/emphasized in service learning programs in the following ways:

1. Specifically stated in learning goals/objectives/outcomes
2. Theme for student reflection
3. Topic in faculty training/development
4. Topic for community partner formation or criteria for selection of CPs
5. Topic in presentations/speaking about SL

Respondents speak about social justice

I think the connection, or attempt to make one, is vital. Our students have to leave us convinced that they have a part to play in creating a more just, more humane world.

If it doesn't make this connection, I don't see how it can properly be called 'Jesuit.'

Findings: Solidarity

Second in **resonance**

Third in **uniformity**

Less explicitly-incorporated than social justice, but still incorporated and promoted in the following ways:

1. Theme for student reflection
2. Topic in presentations/speaking about SL
3. Topic for community partner formation or criteria for selection of CPs
4. Training/development with student leaders
5. Training/development with faculty

Solidarity: alternative terms

- Reciprocity
- Assets-based approach
- Community
- *Cura personalis*
- Mutually beneficial
- Men and women for others
- Accompaniment
- Relationship
- “With” not “for”
- Social justice

Respondents speak about solidarity

Helping students understand that listening and accompaniment can be service in contrast to the U.S. tendency to do and fix and solve.

The term itself seems to have very weak acceptance... I often have to 'hide' it under discussions of reciprocity and asset-based community development.

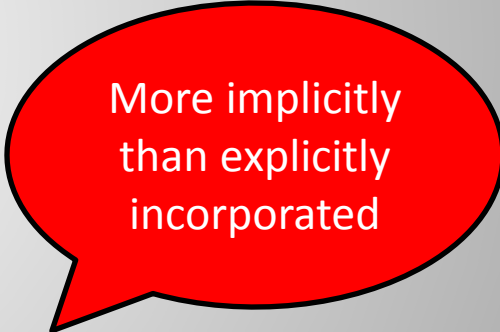
Findings: Ignatian Spirituality

Third in **resonance**

Second in **uniformity**

Least explicitly incorporated of the 3 values, but still incorporated and promoted in the following ways:

1. Design of and approach to student reflection
2. Mentioned in documents/information about SL
3. Topic in presentations/speaking about SL
4. Topic in faculty training/development
5. In training/developing student leaders



More implicitly
than explicitly
incorporated

Ignatian spirituality: alternative perspectives

- Reflection
- Religion/faith
 - -journey, -formation, development
- Meta-Framework
- Finding God in all things
- Examen

Respondents speak about Ignatian spirituality

Ignatian spirituality is essential in providing the larger framework of why social justice and solidarity are so integral within service learning. Without it, our core principles are not grounded and are susceptible to changing trends and ideologies.

The issue of spirituality and faith is challenging for some faculty members who are not particularly interested in these issues of faith development. This separation causes students to compartmentalize their experience in service, faith and in their academic pursuits, instead of finding ways to integrate these various experiences.

Mission-practice alignment in service learning

2. Is there any degree of “melt”* between rhetoric and practice with regard to the explicit incorporation of Jesuit values into service learning programs at AJCU schools?

* “Melt” refers to the differential between mission and practice.

Measuring “Melt”

How important do you personally think the connection between SL and _____ is?

Very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, very unimportant, unsure

Is _____ a value that is emphasized in the SL program?

Very explicitly, somewhat explicitly, somewhat implicitly, very implicitly

Does the SL program incorporate, address, or promote _____?

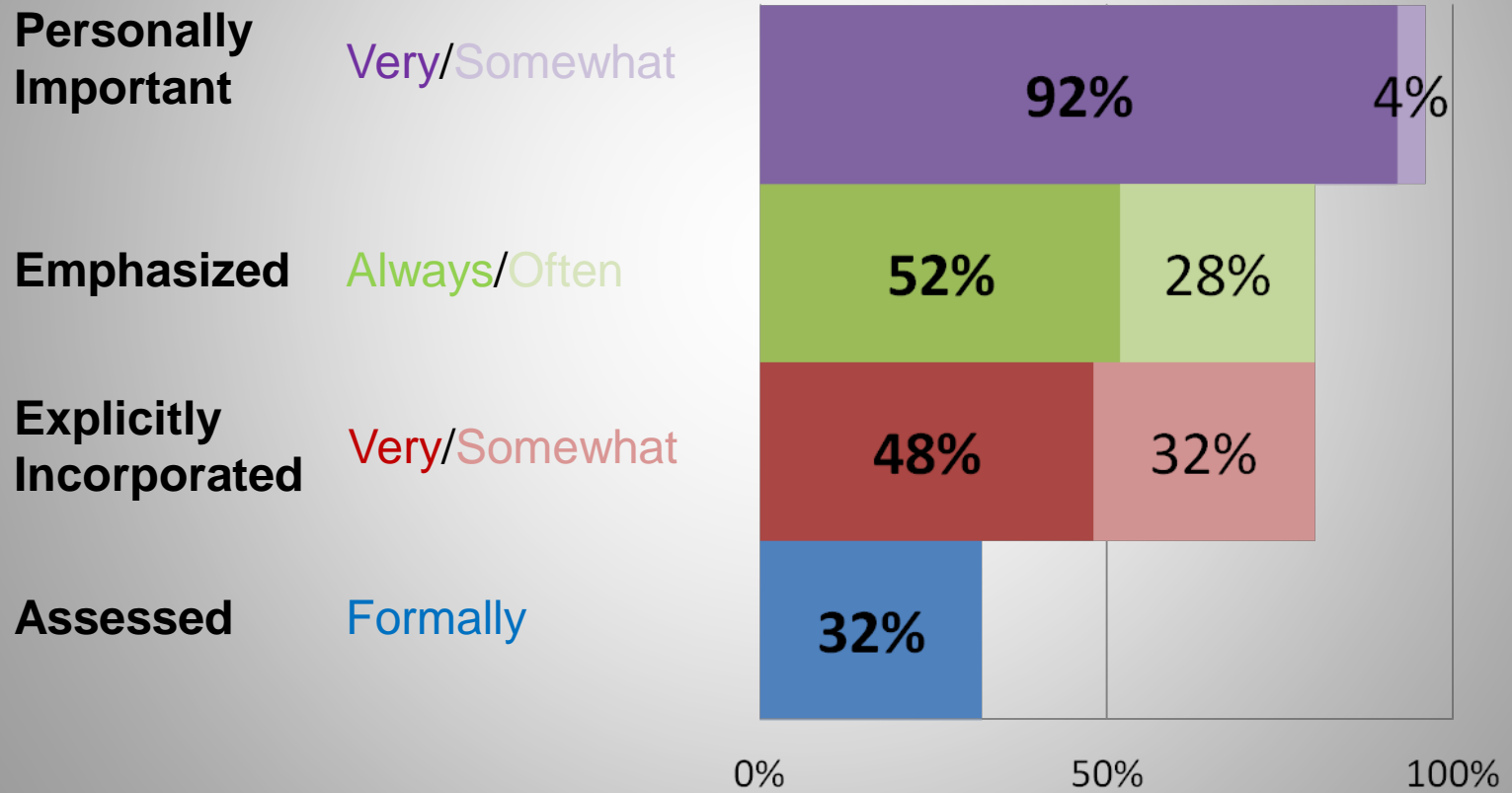
Never, seldom, sometimes, often, always

Does the SL program assess _____?

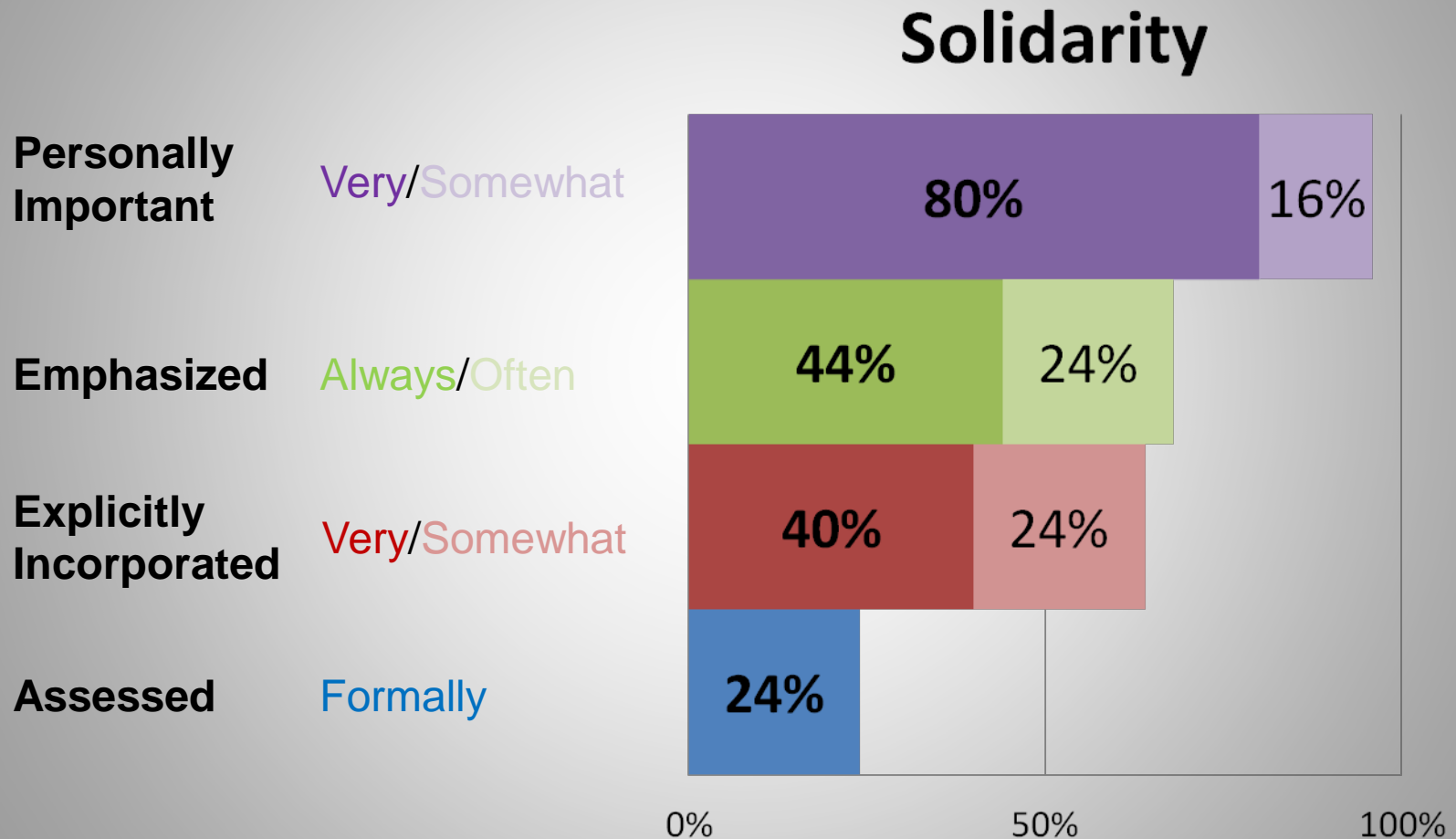
No; Yes, we assess informally; Yes, we assess formally

“Melt” between mission and practice

Social Justice

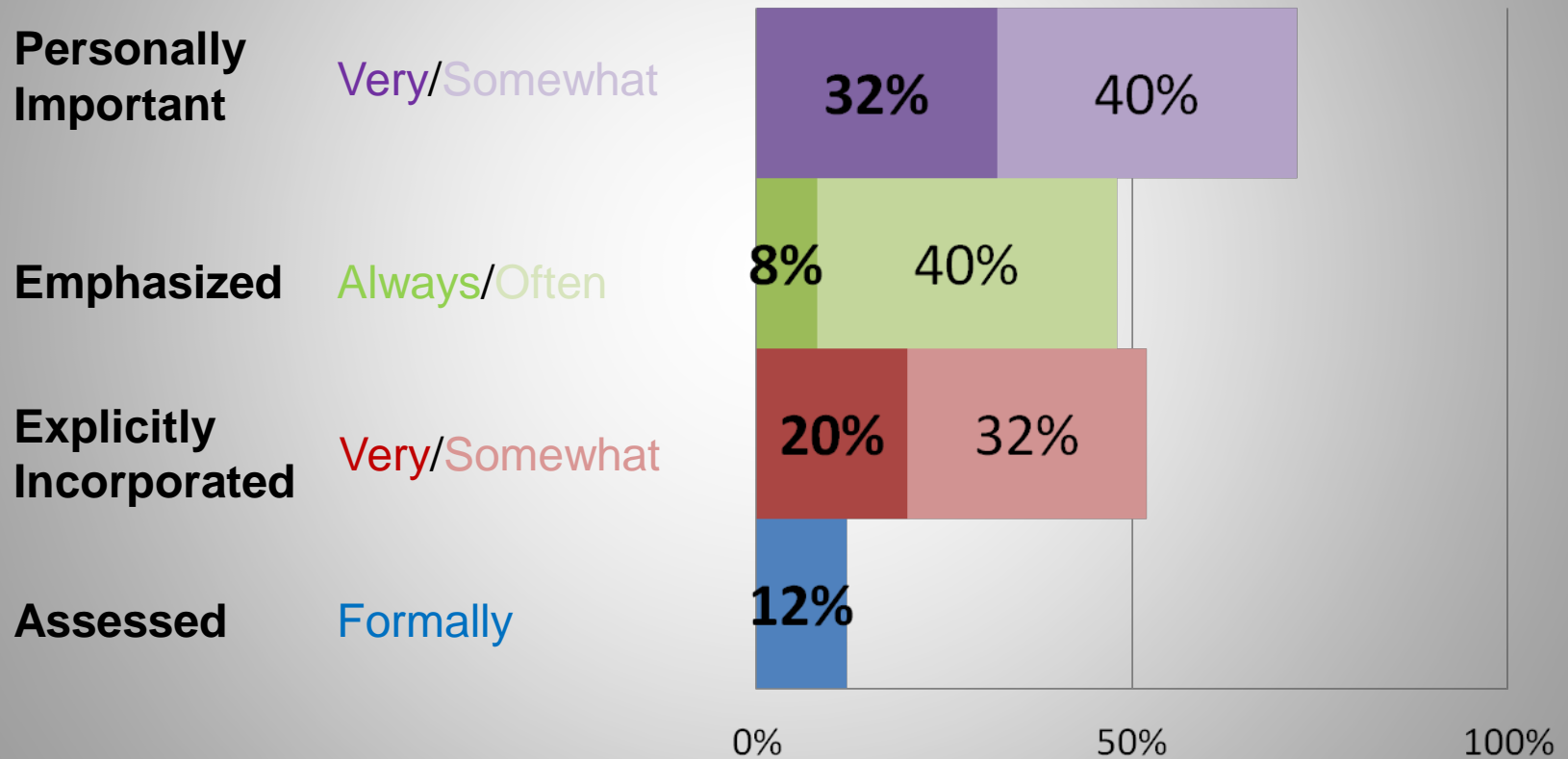


“Melt” between mission and practice

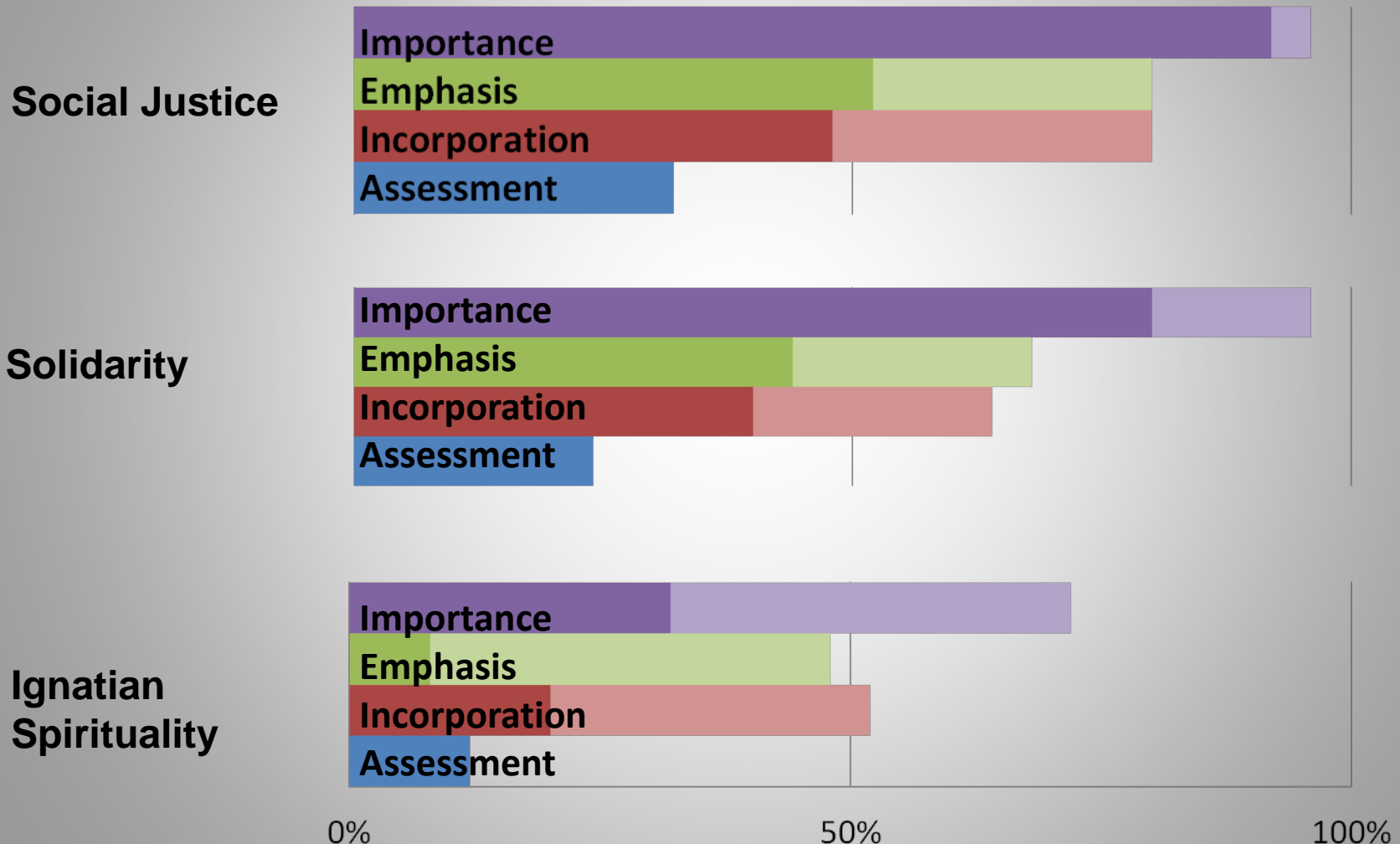


“Melt” between mission and practice

Ignatian Spirituality



“Melt” between rhetoric and practice



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Challenges to incorporating Jesuit values

Social Justice	Solidarity	Ignatian Spirituality
Faculty concerns	Student resistance	Faculty concerns
Partner issues	Faculty concerns	Student resistance
	Partner issues	Compartmentalization

Faculty concerns include

- Lack of resonance
- Capacity to integrate
- Perceived lack of academic rigor and course connection
- Varying definitions
- Design/delivery differential

Student resistance

“helping” vs.
“relationship” mindset

Partner issues

agencies may not
understand their work in
these terms

Compartmentalization

Relegation of religious
concerns to campus ministry
or theology department

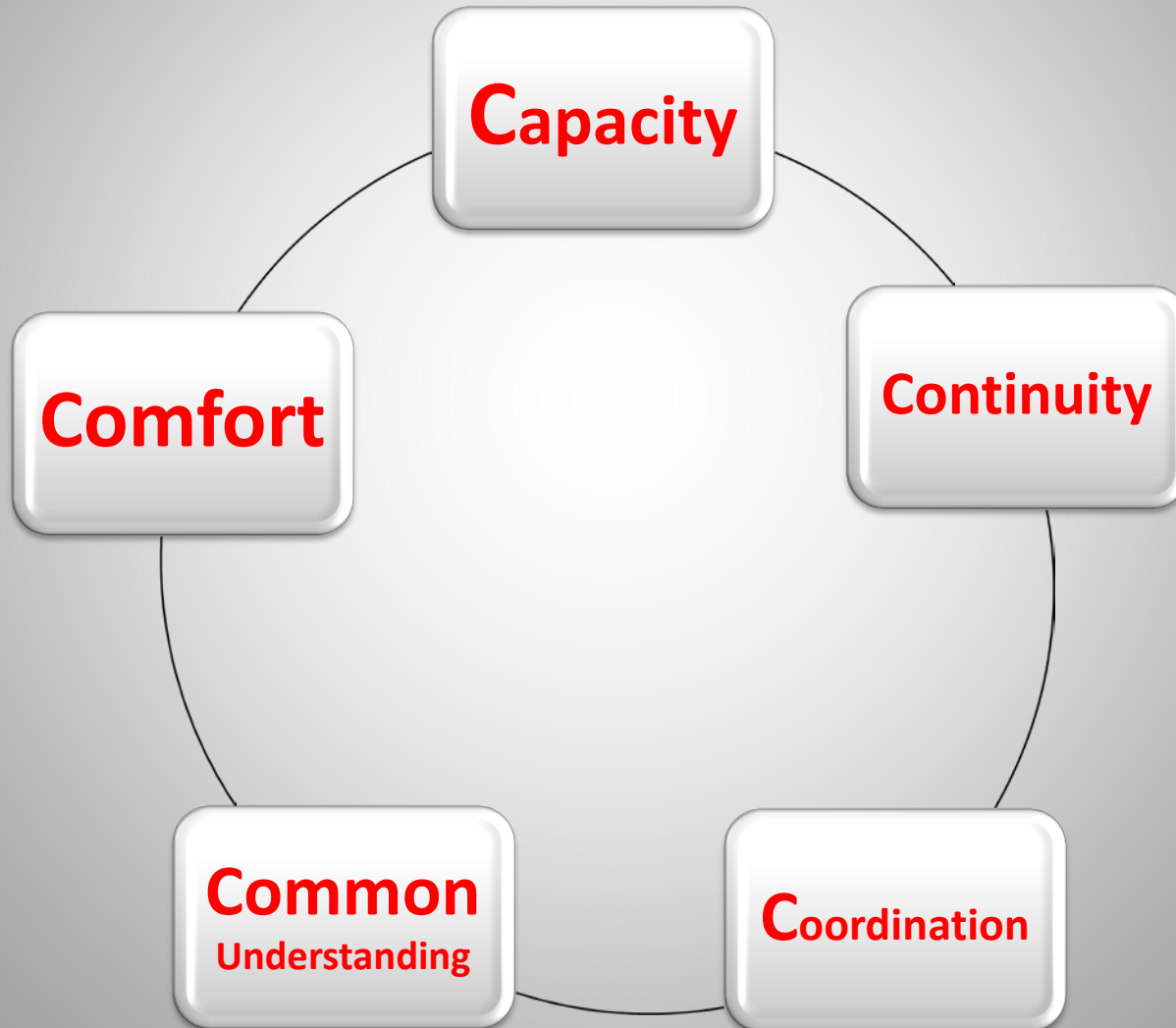
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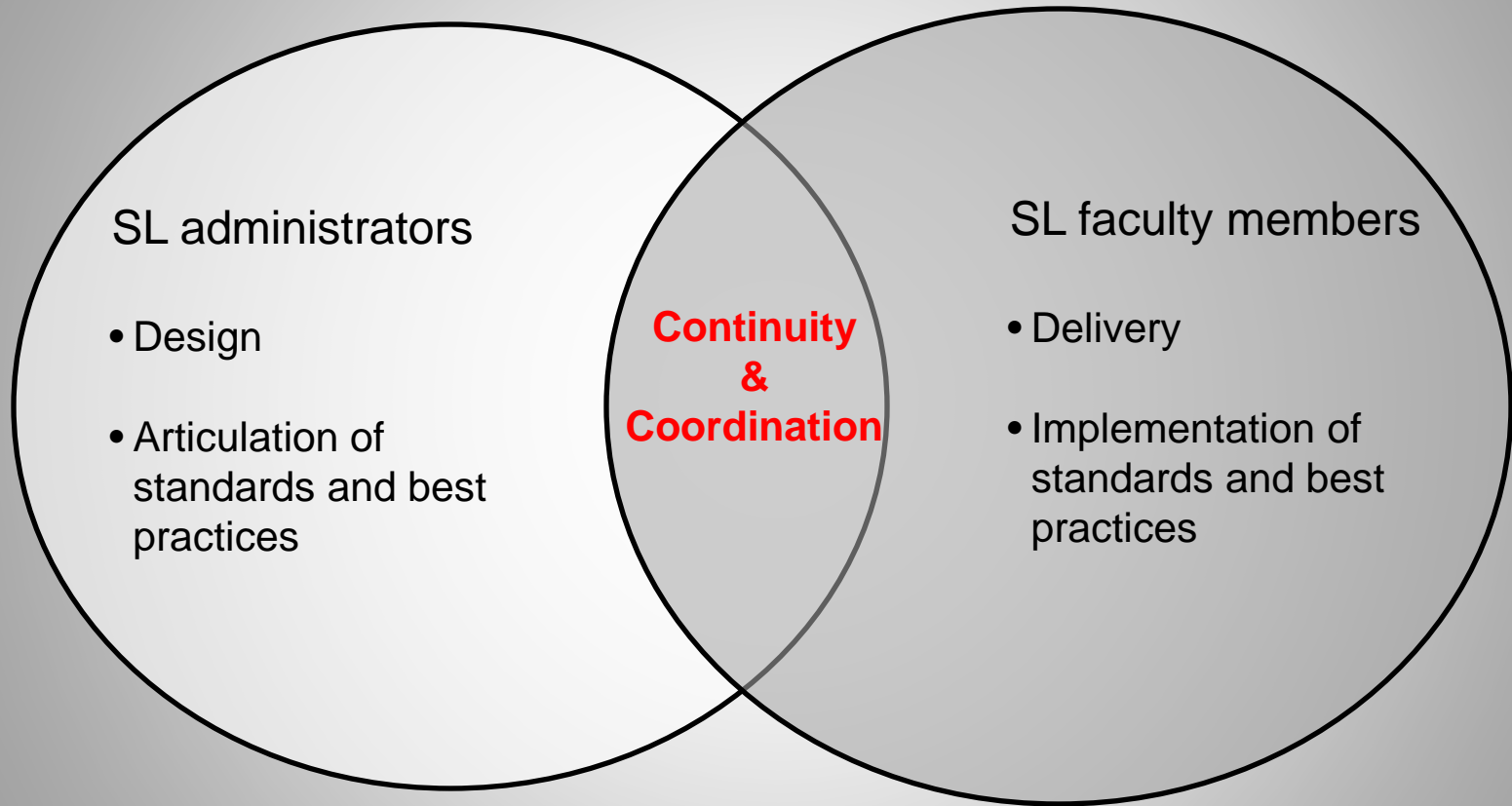
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Mission-practice alignment relies on SL **faculty** and SL **administrators**



Shared responsibility for mission-practice alignment



Improving mission-practice alignment

Prioritize faculty development around Jesuit values

Approach faculty formation in a spirit of *invitation* rather than *obligation*




Discuss origins and meanings of Jesuit values

Provide discipline-specific models and examples for integrating each value

Go beyond procedural training for SL faculty; offer more advanced and intellectually robust formation opportunities

Recruit faculty as mentors and leaders in this process

Addressing the challenges

Social Justice	Solidarity	Ignatian Spirituality
Faculty concerns 	Student resistance	Faculty concerns 
Partner issues	Faculty concerns 	Student resistance
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Recommendations for Jesuit institutions

Develop shared language and common understandings around key Jesuit values

Demystify solidarity and Ignatian spirituality

Develop models for incorporating these values into service learning courses

Continue strengthening hallmark value of social justice by:

Intentionally
incorporating

social justice education
into training and
development efforts
with all 3 main SL
constituencies

Regularly measuring

social justice outcomes
and sharing assessment
results widely

Squarely aligning

the paradigm of service
learning as a form of
social justice education

Recommendations for all institutions

“Audit” for distinctive values; identify a hallmark value

Incorporate distinctive values into training and development efforts with all 3 constituencies (faculty, community partners and students)

Ensure that service learning professionals possess the intellectual expertise, resources, empowerment and support necessary to undertake robust mission-oriented faculty development

Recruit faculty as mentors and leaders in this process

Regularly and formally measure and assess SL outcomes related to distinctive values